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THE COCHRANE RANCHE SITE

Roderick J. Heitzmann

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THE COCHRANE RANCHE
HISTORIC SITE:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS, 1977

By
Roderick Heitzmann

late 19th C.

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INTRODUCTION

Archaeological excavations at Cochrane Ranche Historic Site (R7C): EhPo-37, were undertaken by personnel of the Archaeological Survey of Alberta at the request of the Historic Sites Service from July 15 to October 24, 1977. The purpose of the research was to provide information about the historic ranch occupation of the Cochrane Ranche Company and the British American Ranche Company (1881-1888) prior to the development of the area as an historic park by Alberta Culture.

The excavations were carried out under supervision of the author. The work force usually consisted of six to ten inmates from the Calgary Correctional Institute provided through the Inmate Work Programme of the Alberta Solicitor's General Department.

Two buildings, the manager's residence and a bunkhouse, and a well were excavated. Large quantities of historic artifacts were recovered in the excavations. Analysis of the artifacts indicates that these buildings were most intensely occupied in the period 1881 to 1905. There are some indications of social differences between inhabitants of the two buildings.

The excavations at Cochrane Ranche allow a preliminary definition of late 19th century ranching culture component in Alberta. The identification and description of the material culture at the site should aid the study of Western Canadian history. The construction data could permit reconstruction of the two residential buildings.

APPENDIX 6 PERSONAL ITEMS

This group of artifacts includes a variety of personal items including beads, pipes, toys, harmonicas and combs. Each subgroup is discussed below. These items are plotted on Figures 9 and 15.

BEADS (Table 6.1).

Beads are not common on the site with only a total of 89 beads being recovered. Most of these (75) are small seed beads found together under floor boards of the bunkhouse living room (R7C66B-1). The remaining beads have considerable variation in colour and size. Most interesting of these are two red carnelian (natural stone) beads polished to a high gloss. Both of these were found in the manager's residence. Carnelian is a semiprecious stone most likely to derive from Brazil, India or Arabia (Funk and Wagnall 1975:5 pg 172).

COINS (Table 6.2)

Four coins were recovered from Cochrane Ranche Historic Site. From the floor level of the manager's residence came a British two-shilling piece (R7C2X5A-1). On the obverse in Gothic lettering is ONE FLORIN/ONE TENTH OF A POUND. On the reverse is VICTORIA d:g:orit:reg:f:d: mdccclxiv (1864). Also from the manager's residence was a Canadian five-cent piece dating 1898; Queen Victoria, of course, is on the reverse. Near the edge is a small hole probably for suspension on a charm bracelet or necklace.

Two Canadian one-cent pieces were found in the bunkhouse. One (R7C77A-1) pictures King George V and dates 1920. The other (R7C71-1) was issued 1937, under the reign of King George VI.

COSMETICS CONTAINERS (Table 6.3)

Cosmetic containers recovered include a compact or powder container (R7C2X4A-8) and two porcelain cylindrical containers which may have been perfume containers (R7C64B-3, R7C81-140). The compact/powder container is embossed with an elaborate floral design.

HAIR-RELATED ITEMS (Table 6.4)

Hair-related items include four combs, one hair curler and one mass of

TABLE 6.1 BEADS

CATALOGUE NUMBER	MATERIAL	MANUFACTURE	COLOUR (KIDD 1970)	SHAPE	DIA
R7C 2G7-7	carnelian	polished	maple	round	1.1
2G8-40	glass	wound	dark navy	round	.85
2H8A-1	carnelian	polished	maple	round	1.4
2J6-9	glass	wound	dark navy	round	.85
63A-1	glass	wound	redwood opaque	oval	.5
63C-9 to 11	glass	wound	bright navy	donut	.9
63C-12	glass	wound	bright navy	round	.7
63C-13	glass	wound	white	round	.8
63C-14	glass		clear	oval	.6
63C-15	glass	wound	surf green	round	.4
66B-1(75)	glass	wound	white/blue/ yellow	round	small
(1)	glass	wound	white		medium
70B-8	glass	wound	bright navy	round	.8
73A-59	glass	wound	aqua blue	round	.2

TABLE 6.2 COINS

	COUNTRY	VALUE	RULER	DATE
R7C 2G5A-1	CANADA	FIVE CENTS	VICTORIA	1898
2X5A-1	BRITAIN	TWO SHILLINGS	VICTORIA	1864
71-1	CANADA	ONE CENT	GEORGE VI	1937
77A-1	CANADA	ONE CENT	GEORGE V	1920

TABLE 6.3 DATA SHEET - COSMETICS CONTAINERS

R7C 2X4A-8	compact/powder container	bronze/copper
64B-3	perfume container	porcelain
81-140	perfume container	porcelain

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